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EARLY OPPOSITION TO THE CINCINNATI

By Major Edgar Erskine Hume, U. S. A.,

President of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia and Assistant Secretary General.

1783

[Address delivered July 4, 1936, before the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the Colonial State House in Newport, Rhode Island, and Published in "Americana," the Quarterly of The American Historical Society, Inc., Issue of October, 1936, Vol. XXX, No. 4, pages 597-638.]

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HUME, EDGAR ERSKINE, 1889-
— Early opposition to the Cincinnati... n.p.
[1936]
44p.

Author's autograph presentation copy to Newberry library.

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Early Opposition to the Cincinnati

THERE are in the United States upwards of two hundred of what are termed "patriotic societies." Descendants of men who participated in every war fought by our country or by the colonies, have formed such groups. Almost every epoch in the evolution of the United States is commemorated by societies of men and of women. Those whose ancestors came in the "Mayflower" have their flourishing society. Those whose ancestors came, a generation previously to Virginia, have a society known as First Families of Virginia. And so on. One would hardly think of finding fault with these organizations though perhaps some of them appear not very dignified at times, and others are said to exist for revenue only. However, they all work for American ideals and for the keeping alive of the spirit of the founders and other patriots of the Nation.

Criticism is non-existent today though there may be an occasional sly thrust at all hereditary societies, as for example, the following doggerel lines in a recent issue of a humorous weekly magazine:

The D. A. R.lings
Chatter like starlings
Telling their ancestors' names,
While grimly aloof
With looks of reproof,
Sit the Colonial Dames.

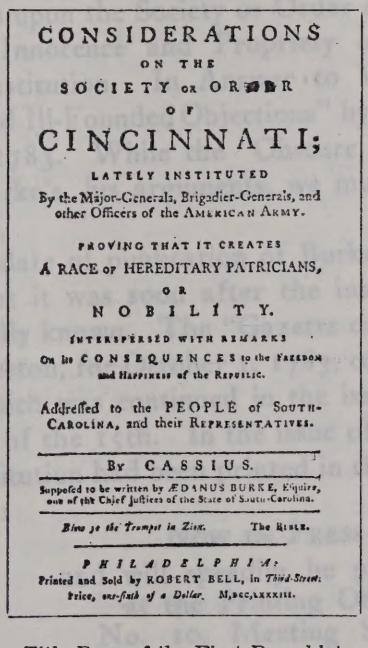
And The Cincinnati
All merry and chatty
Dangle their badges and pendants,

1603468

But haughty and proud
Disdaining the crowd
Brood the Mayflower Descendants.

—Arthur Guiterman in
"The New Yorker," 1936.

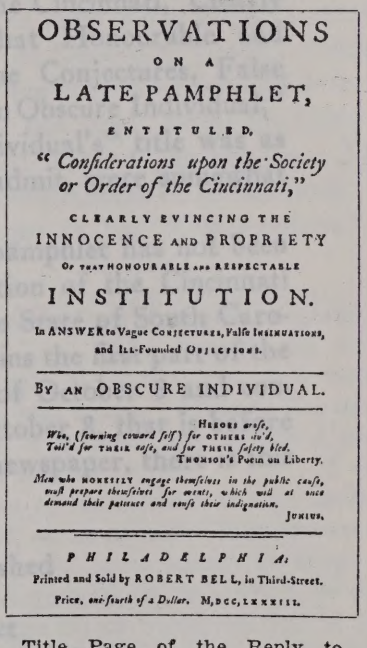
Yet, the first of these societies, the one which has served as a model for all the rest, met with a storm of serious criticism in the first few months of its existence, which we have difficulty today in comprehending. The first blow was struck by an eccentric Irish judge in South Carolina, a man who had first studied theology at St.-Omer,



CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
SOCIETY OR ORDER
OF
CINCINNATI;
LATELY INSTITUTED
By the Major-Generals, Brigadier-Generals, and other Officers of the AMERICAN ARMY.
PROVING THAT IT CREATES
A RACE OF HEREDITARY PATRICIANS,
OR
NOBILITY.
INTERSPERSED WITH REMARKS
On its CONSEQUENCES to the FREEDOM and HAPPINESS of the REPUBLIC.
Addreſſed to the PEOPLE of SOUTH-CAROLINA, and their REPRESENTATIVES.
BY CASSIUS.
Suppoſed to be written by ÆDANUS BURKE, Eſquire, one of the Chief Juſtices of the State of South-Carolina.
Blow ye the Trumpet in Zion. The BIBLE.
PHILADELPHIA:
Printed and Sold by ROBERT BELL, in *Third-Street.*
Price, *one-fifth of a Dollar.* M,DCC,LXXXIII.

Title Page of the First Pamphlet Attacking the Society of the Cincinnati. By Judge Ædanus Burke, of the Supreme Court of South Carolina.

Philadelphia, 1783.
(From the Author's Collection.)

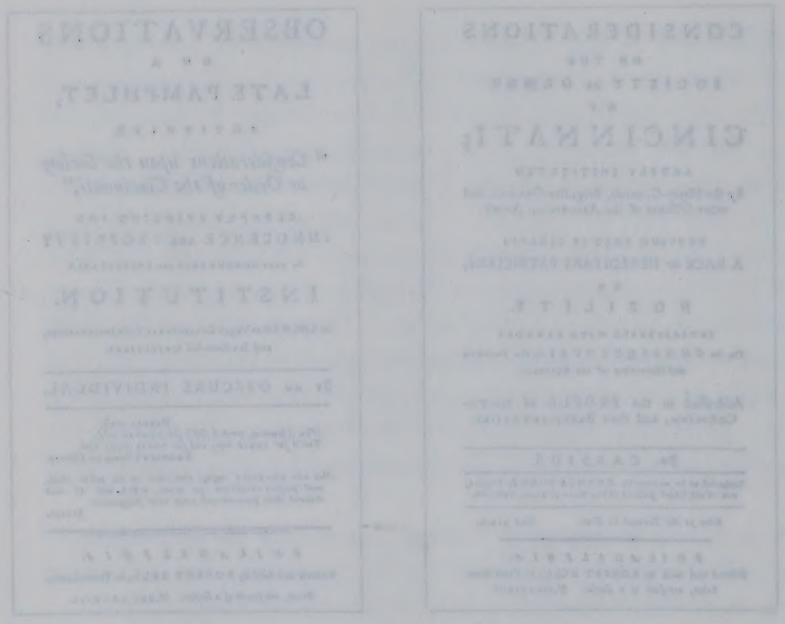


OBSERVATIONS
ON A
LATE PAMPHLET,
ENTITULED,
"Conſiderations upon the Society or Order of the Cincinnati,"
CLEARLY EVINCING THE
INNOCENCE AND PROPRIETY
OF THAT HONOURABLE AND RESPECTABLE
INSTITUTION.
In ANSWER to Vague Conjectures, Falſe Inſinuations, and Ill-Founded Objections.
BY AN OBSCURE INDIVIDUAL.
HEROES *aroſe,*
Who, (ſcorning coward ſelf) for OTHERS *liv'd,*
Toil'd for THEIR *eaſe, and for* THEIR *ſafety bled.*
THOMSON's Poem on Liberty.
Men who HONESTLY *engage themſelves in the public cauſe, muſt prepare themſelves for wants, which will at once demand their patience and raiſe their indignation.*
JUNIUS.
PHILADELPHIA:
Printed and Sold by ROBERT BELL, in Third-Street.
Price, *one-fourth of a Dollar.* M,DCC,LXXXIII.

Title Page of the Reply to Burke's Pamphlet Against the Society of the Cincinnati. By a Member of the Society, said to have been Brigadier-General Stephen Moylan, of Pennsylvania.

Philadelphia, 1783.
(From the Author's Collection.)

France. Ædanus Burke, under the pseudonym "Cassius," wrote a clever pamphlet—it was the day of political pamphleteering—entitled "Considerations on the Society or Order of Cincinnati; Lately Instituted by the Major-Generals, Brigadier-Generals, and other Officers



Title Page of the First Pamphlet Attacking the Society of the Cincinnati, by Judge Johnson [sic], of the Supreme Court of South Carolina.

Philadelphia, 1783.
(From the Author's Collection)

of the American Army. Proving that it Creates a Race of Hereditary Patricians, or Nobility. Interspersed with Remarks on its Consequences to the Freedom and Happiness of the Republic. 'Blow ye the Trumpet in Zion,'" Philadelphia, 1783. Under this lengthy title, Burke brought forward every kind of argument to show that the Cincinnati, through the hidden design of establishing an hereditary aristocracy in the new republic, would eventually wreck it.

Soon a member of the society, said (in Finotti's "Bibliographia Catholica Americana") to have been Brigadier-General Stephen Moylan, sometime president of the Pennsylvania Cincinnati, wrote a reply to Burke, entitled: "Observations on a Late Pamphlet, Entitled 'Considerations upon the Society or Order of the Cincinnati,' Clearly Evincing the Innocence and Propriety of that Honourable and Respectable Institution. In Answer to Vague Conjectures, False Insinuations and Ill-Founded Objections" by "An Obscure Individual," Philadelphia, 1783. While the "Obscure Individual's" title was as effective as Burke's, his arguments, we must admit, were somewhat less convincing.

The exact date of publication of Burke's pamphlet has not been ascertained, but it was soon after the institution of the Cincinnati became generally known. The "Gazette of the State of South Caroline" of Charleston, for October 1, 1783, contains the first part of the Institution, which was continued in the issue of October 8 and concluded in that of the 15th. In the issue of October 8, that is before the whole Institution had been printed in this newspaper, there is this announcement:

NOW IN PRESS
and will speedily be published
at the Printing Office
No. 10, Meeting Street
CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SOCIETY OR ORDER
OF CINCINNATI
Lately instituted by the Major Generals, Brigadiers, and other officers of the American Army; proving that it creates a race of hereditary patricians or nobility; and interspersed with remarks on the consequences to the freedom and happiness of the People
Addressed to the People of South Carolina and their Representatives
By *Cassius*

The same notice appeared in the "Gazette" for October 15, while that for October 23 announced that the book was "Just Published." Thereafter the advertisement of the sale of the work was carried in the issues of October 30, November 20, December 4 and December 18. "Freeman's Journal or the North American Intelligencer" of Philadelphia carried an advertisement of Burke's book in the issue of November 12, stating that it was "just published and now selling at Bell's Book-Store." A similar advertisement is in the issues of November 19 and 26, December 3, 10, 24, January 14 and 28; none later found.

The date of publication of the reply "By an Obscure Individual" is also unknown, except that it followed soon after Burke's attack. It is advertised in "Freeman's Journal" of December 3, 1783, though not on the same page as Burke's advertisement. The issue of December 10 has both advertisements on the fire page, while the reply is likewise listed in the issues of December 24 and January 14. This newspaper apparently has no later announcements of either book.

Here are a few of Burke's charges in his "Observations," a pamphlet now exceedingly rare:

> The order of Cincinnati usurps a nobility without gift or grant, in defiance of Congress and the states. . . . . And though the order cannot, at present, be sanctioned by legal authority, yet that makes nothing against the consequences which will ensue. Though the order is self-created, and an infringement of a general law of the Union; yet if the courage of the officers does not fail them; . . . . if they have but patience, subtlety, and address to cloke their design under a pious name of raising a charitable fund, so as to make it go down for a few years, ... my life for it, they will have leisure to laugh at, and master their opponents. The next generation will drink as deep of noble blood, and a hereditary peerage be as firmly settled in each potent family, and rivetted in our government, as any order of nobility is in the monarchies of Europe. The order is planted in a fiery, hot ambition, and thirst for power; and its branches will end in tyranny. The Cincinnati will soon be corrupted, and the spirit of the people depressed; for in less than a century it will occasion such an inequality in the condition of our inhabitants, that the country will be composed of two ranks of men, the patricians or nobles, and the rabble. This is the natural result of an establishment whose departure is so sudden from our open professions of republicanism, that it must give a thinking mind most melancholy forebodings.

In another passage he says:

I know that it will be denied that the order is, what I do boldly assert it to be, an hereditary peerage. Some of its members assume the cloak of political modesty, and under it talk, that they are no more dangerous than [any other] corporation. . . . . I say, that a body of military commanders, distinguished from the rest of society under an institution founded on the illustrious actions of so singular a revolution as that of America . . . . these, I say, are peers of the realm, *pares regni,* and nothing more or less. . . . . The Cincinnati . . . . would soon have and hold an exclusive right to offices, honors and authorities, civil and military. And the whole country besides themselves, a mere mob of plebeians, without weight or estimation; degraded in the eyes of our patricians, as the Roman people were by their republican nobility (p. 8).

The not-to-be-deceived judge considered that the Baron de Steuben was primarily responsible for the crime of creating the Cincinnati, and tried to direct suspicion of foreigners and foreign customs against him. "I have the honor," he said, "to tell Baron Steuben, that though an order of peerage may do very well under the petty princes of Germany, yet in America it is incompatible with our freedom."

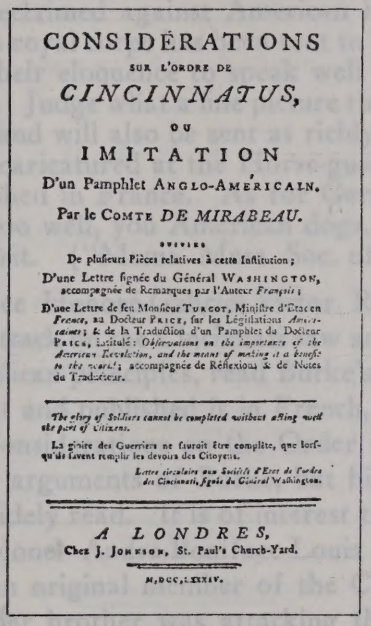
General Knox, the Secretary General, who had first conceived the order, wrote letter after letter to both friends and enemies of the Cincinnati, seeking to make the society's position clear. A little known interchange of letters between him and the Baron de Steuben, who had presided at the first meeting, is amusing and shows the sense of humor of both men. Knox wrote (21 February, 1784):

Your Society, monsieur baron, has occasioned great jealousies among the good people of New England, who say it is an altogether outlandish creature, formed by foreign influence. It is still heightened by a letter from one of our ministers abroad, who intimates that it was formed in Europe to overthrow our happy Constitution. You see how much you have to answer for by the introduction of your European distinctions. I contend, to the utmost of my power, that you only had your share in the matter; but it will have no effect. Burke's allusion has fixed it, and you must support the credit of having created a new and hereditary nobility. "Mems. Mass Soc. of Cin.," 1873, p. 29.)

The minister mentioned in this may have been either John Adams or Thomas Jefferson, as they agreed at least in one thing, a hearty dislike and fear of the Society of the Cincinnati.

To Knox's letter, Steuben replied as follows (11 November, 1784):

A ça, Monsieur le Cincinnatus! your pernicious designs are then unveiled,—you wish to introduce dukes and peers into our republic? No, my Lord; no, your Grace, that will not do; there is a Cassius more far-sighted than this German baron; of whom you have made a cat's-paw to draw the chestnuts out of the fire. Cassius knows only



CONSIDÉRATIONS
SUR L'ORDRE DE
CINCINNATUS,
OU
IMITATION
D'un Pamphlet ANGLO-AMÉRICAIN,
Par le COMTE *DE MIRABEAU.*

SUIVIES
De plusieurs Pièces relatives à cette Institution;
D'une Lettre signée du Général WASHINGTON, accompagnée de Remarques par l'Auteur *Français*;
D'une Lettre de feu Monsieur TURGOT, Ministre d'Etat en *France*, au Docteur PRICE, sur les Législations *Américaines*; & de la Traduction d'un Pamphlet du Docteur PRICE, intitulé: *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution, and the means of making it a benefit to the world*; accompagnée de Réflexions & de Notes du Traducteur.

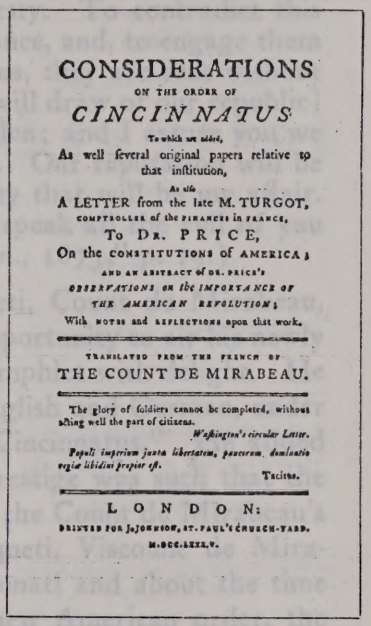
The glory of Soldiers cannot be completed without acting well the part of Citizens.
La gloire des Guerriers ne sauroit être complète, que lorsqu'ils savent remplir les devoirs des Citoyens.
Lettre circulaire aux Sociétés d'Etat de l'ordre des Cincinnati, signée du Général Washington.

A LONDRES,
Chez J. JOHNSON, St. Paul's Church-Yard.

M,DCC,LXXXIV.

Title Page of the French Edition of the Count de Mirabeau's Book Opposing the Society of the Cincinnati. Based on Burke's Pamphlet.

London, 1784.
(From the Author's Collection.)



CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE ORDER OF
CINCINNATUS
To which are added,
As well several original papers relative to that institution,
As also
A LETTER from the late M. TURGOT, COMPTROLLER of the FINANCES in FRANCE,
To DR. PRICE,
On the CONSTITUTIONS of AMERICA;
AND AN ABSTRACT of DR. PRICE'S
OBSERVATIONS on the IMPORTANCE of THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION;
With NOTES and REFLECTIONS upon that work.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
THE COUNT DE MIRABEAU.

The glory of soldiers cannot be completed, without acting well the part of citizens.
Washington's circular Letter.
Populi imperium juncta libertatem, paucorum dominatio regia libidini propior est.
Tacitus.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
M.DCC.LXXXV.

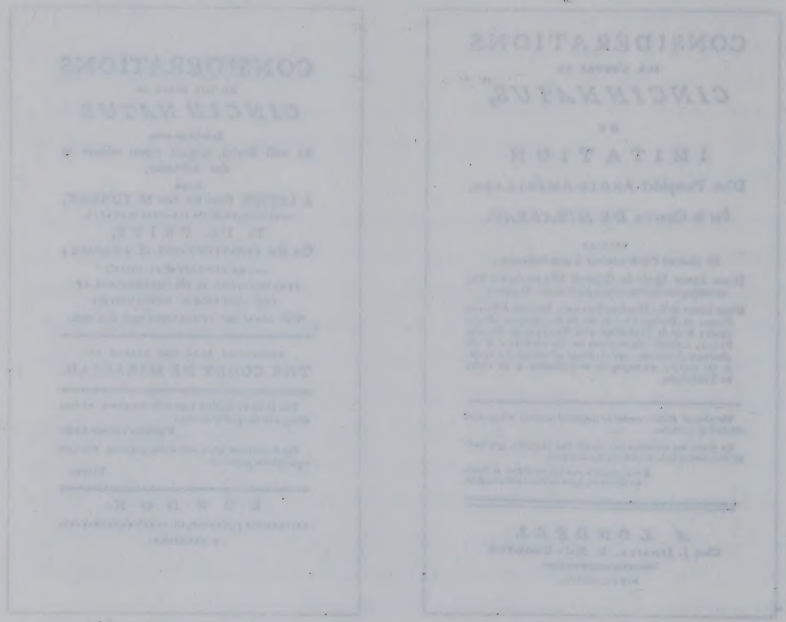
Title Page of the British Edition of the Count de Mirabeau's Book Attacking the Society of the Cincinnati. It appeared soon after the French edition.

London, 1785.
(From the Author's Collection.)

a part of the secret. He makes me the author and grand master, thus whipping you over my shoulders. But listen! I will prove to Cassius that this dangerous plan had its birth in the brain of two Yankees; *i. e.*, Knox and Huntington: therefore

"Blow ye the Trumpet in Zion."

We know very well these Bostonians and the people of the Holy Land, who beneath a Presbyterian and modest air conceal the most ambitious designs. Cassius does not know all the danger. When



I shall tell him that the young Marquis Henry Knox is already promised in marriage to a Princess of Hyder Ali, and that the young Countess of Huntington is to marry the hereditary Prince of Sweden, that the king of Spain wishes to accept the place of Treasurer of the Order, then,

"Blow ye the Trumpet in Zion."

See the pamphlet of Cassius—read it—tremble! . . . .

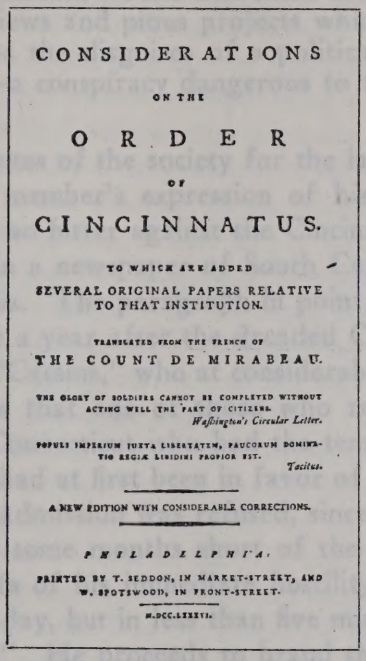
Some discourteous chevaliers who returned to France have for a long time declaimed against American honesty. To contradict this calumny, the royal corps has been sent to France, and, to engage them to employ their eloquence to speak well of us, they are sent without salt or meal. Judge what a fine picture they will draw of our republic! I hope Armand will also be sent as richly laden; and I assure you we are all well caricatured at the Horse-guards. Our reputation will be well established in France. As for Germany that will be my affair. I love you too well, you American dogs, to speak all the evil of you that you merit. ("Mems. Mass. Soc. of Cin., 1873," p. 19.)

In France Honoré-Gabriel-Victor Riqueti, Count de Mirabeau, who in the attack on the Cincinnati saw an opportunity to air his newly found republican principles, read Burke's pamphlet with delight. He elaborated it and published it in French, English and German, under the title "Considerations on the Order of Cincinnatus." He added little to the arguments of Burke, but his prestige was such that the work was widely read. It is of interest that the Count de Mirabeau's brother, Colonel André-Boniface-Louis Riqueti, Viscount de Mirabeau, was an original member of the Cincinnati and about the time that the elder brother was attacking the new American order, the younger was writing a pamphlet entitled "Considérations pour l'Ordre" in which he defended the Order of Malta, then likewise the object of republican attack.

Here are a few passages from Mirabeau's book, which has become rare. It was said that Franklin first suggested to him that he publish an English version.

He begins thus: "I never printed anything before the present work under a name which my father has rendered it difficult for me to bear. . . . . " The Tribune was immensely pleased with his effort. In a letter to the critic Mauvillon he said: "I confess I set some value upon it. It appears to me that in this work there is good philosophy, feeling and good oratory. . . . . It is of all I ever wrote, that with which I am least dissatisfied."

The Cincinnati, continued Mirabeau, "is an institution which must shortly undermine the public weal, their liberty, and their country; strip the middle and lower ranks of life of all influence and of all importance, consign them to the most palpable contempt, and reduce them to the completest nullity; or at best to the sad privilege of murmuring, when it will be too late to remedy the evil. So blind, so thoughtless are the multitude!"



CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

ORDER

OF

CINCINNATUS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

SEVERAL ORIGINAL PAPERS RELATIVE TO THAT INSTITUTION.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

THE COUNT DE MIRABEAU.

THE GLORY OF SOLDIERS CANNOT BE COMPLETED WITHOUT ACTING WELL THE PART OF CITIZENS.
Washington's Circular Letter.

POPULI IMPERIUM JUXTA LIBERTATEM, PAUCORUM DOMINATIO REGIÆ LIBIDINI PROPIOR EST.
Tacitus.

A NEW EDITION WITH CONSIDERABLE CORRECTIONS.

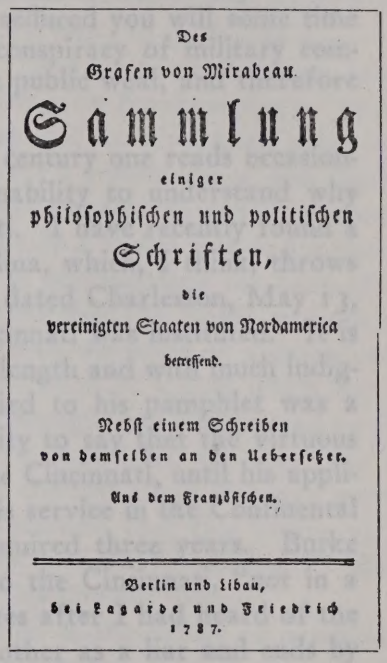
PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY T. SEDDON, IN MARKET-STREET, AND W. SPOTSWOOD, IN FRONT-STREET.

M.DCC.LXXXVI.

Title Page of the First American Edition of the Count de Mirabeau's Attack on the Society of the Cincinnati.

Philadelphia; 1786.
(From the Author's Collection.)



Des

Grafen von Mirabeau

Sammlung

einiger

philoſophiſchen und politiſchen

Schriften,

die

vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerica

betreffend.

Nebſt einem Schreiben

von demſelben an den Ueberſetzer.

Aus dem Franzöſiſchen.

Berlin und Libau,

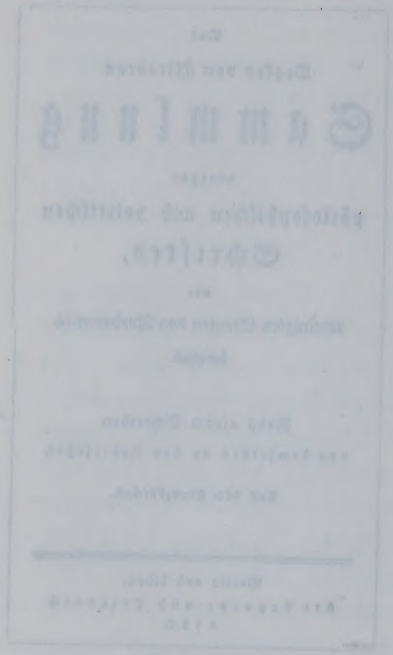
bei Lagarde und Friedrich

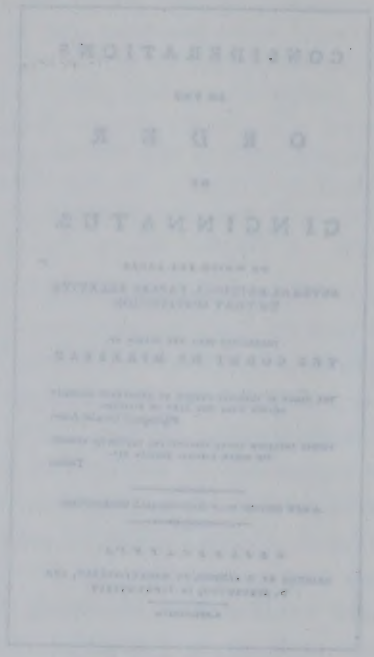
1787.

Title Page of the German Edition of the Count de Mirabeau's Works, Including the Anti-Cincinnati Monograph.
Berlin and Libau, 1787.

(From the Newberry Library, Chicago.)

Mirabeau feared that the hereditary honor of membership in the Cincinnati being, as he said, reserved for military men, the descendants of civil officers "would later be confounded in the vulgar mass of plebeians." However, "the institution of the Order of the Cincinnati is the creation of an actual patriciate and of a military nobility, which will ere long become a civil nobility, and an aristocracy the more dangerous because, being hereditary, it will perpetually increase in the





course of time, and will gather strength from the very prejudices which it will engender."

So, having proven his contentions to his own satisfaction, the Count concludes:

Let the Legislature blast this destructive institution of an artificial and (which is its masterpiece) a decorated nobility. But before she dart the lightening of her vengeance, before she extirpate the name of the Cincinnati, let her admonish her children; let her say: "The patriotic views and pious projects which seduced you will some time or other be the disguises of a political conspiracy of military commanders,—a conspiracy dangerous to the public weal, and therefore criminal."

In minutes of the society for the last century one reads occasionally some member's expression of his inability to understand why Burke was so bitter against the Cincinnati. I have recently found a reference in a newspaper of South Carolina, which, I think, throws light on this. The paragraph in point is dated Charleston, May 13, 1784—just a year after the dreaded Cincinnati was instituted. It is signed by "Cassius," who at considerable length and with much indignation says that one of those who replied to his pamphlet was a writer in Connecticut who had the temerity to say that the virtuous "Cassius" had at first been in favor of the Cincinnati, until his application for admission was refused, since his service in the Continental Army was some months short of the required three years. Burke cited proofs of his immediate hostility to the Cincinnati, "not in a week or a day, but in less than five minutes after I had heard of the institution." He proceeds to brand the other as a liar and ends by inviting him to leave his name with the printer of the Charleston "Gazette," as he himself had done, in order that he might demand satisfaction on the field of honor! Alas, poor Burke, he did protest too much! (Charleston "Gazette," quoted in Freeman's "Journal," Philadelphia, June 23, 1784.)

Judge Burke was indeed a queer fellow and of his eccentricities many anecdotes have been told. He seconded Colonel Aaron Burr in his first duel (with Church, of Hoboken, on September 2, 1789) and forgot, it is said, to load his principal's pistol properly. When his attention was called to this, he said to Burr: "I forgot to grease the leather, but you see he is ready; don't keep him waiting, crack away and I'll grease the next."

"He was accustomed, on leaving the bench, to hang up his silken robes in the house of Mrs. Van Rhine, who dwelt hard by the court-house. On one occasion he took, by mistake, from the lady's closet, her black silk petticoat, that had been suspended beside his gown. As he ascended the bench, he robed himself, thrusting his arms through the pocket holes, when for the first time discovering his error, he exclaimed to great edification of the bar, jury and audience, with his favorite oath, "Before God, I have got on Mrs. Van Rhine's petticoat." ("North Amer. Rev.," CLXI, Oct., 1853, p. 292.)

In "The Stranger in America" (1807), Charles William Janson, a British visitor, paraphrasing a passage in Brackenridge's "Modern Chivalry," tells us that even the Eagle of the Cincinnati came in for criticism by a clergyman who took it for a *graven image,* and "insisted that it was contrary to the injunction of the decalogue." A member sought to inform him that it was merely a badge just as are the lion in the arms of England, the thistle of Scotland and the harp of Ireland. The man of the cloth admitted that the Eagle was not precisely graven since it was not made with the point of a sharp instrument. However, it was the representation of a bird which was the emblem of some heathen deity, for the eagle had been sacred to Jupiter. It might properly, therefore, be considered an idol. He further "shewed from scripture that in the last times idoliters were to spring up, and concluded by an insinuation that this Order of the Cincinnati might be the Gog and Magog of the Apocalypse!" Burke and Mirabeau combined had missed this obvious danger!

But what was the country's reaction to the deluge of pamphlets? There were not a few in much higher position than Burke, who like him feared the danger. Curiously these opponents were, in almost every case, politicians, or shall we say, statesmen, who had not rendered military service. Statesmen who *had* rendered military service, even though ineligible by reason of not having rounded out the full three years, were not hostile to the new society. John Marshall, Edmund Randolph, and men of that stamp were friendly to the Cincinnati, though not considered eligible to regular membership.*

* Those wishing to read the full correspondence of some of the leading men of the period for or against the Society of the Cincinnati may consult the following letters in the published writings of each:

General Washington to General Knox, September 23, 1783.
General Washington to General Knox, October 16, 1783.

The powerful opponents were the Adamses, Jefferson, Jay and Gerry. LaFayette wrote from Paris to John Adams that he had heard with regret that the Cincinnati had been termed by Adams a "French blessing," against which Mr. Adams was said to be very violent. Adams replied that this was not true for he "was not a violent man." But he added that the new order "instituted by private gentlemen," is "against our confederation, against the constitutions of the several States, against the spirits of our governments and the genius of our people." To Charles Spencer he wrote that the Cincinnati "is the first step taken to deface the beauty of our temple of liberty." (C. F. Adams, "Works of John Adams," VIII, p. 187, *et seq.;* IX, p. 523.) John Adams even tried to show that Cincinnatus himself had been overrated! *(Ibid.,* VI, p. 16.)

General Washington to General Knox, February 20, 1784.
General Washington to General Knox, March 20, 1784.
General Washington to Thomas Jefferson, April 8, 1784.
General Washington to Alexander Hamilton, December 11, 1785.
General Washington to James Madison, November 18, 1786.
General Washington to James Madison, December 16, 1786.
General Washington to David Humphreys, December 26, 1786.
General Washington to Edmund Randolph, March 28, 1787.
General Washington to General Knox, April 2, 1787.
General Washington to General Knox, April 27, 1787.
General Washington to Thomas Jefferson, May 30, 1787.
Alexander Hamilton, Eulogium on General Greene, July 4, 1789.
Thomas Jefferson to the Count de Grasse, January 19, 1788.
Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, November 11, 1784.
Thomas Jefferson to M. Meusnier, June 22, 1786.
(A full story of the Cincinnati to the Editor of the *Encyclopédie Politique,* in which Jefferson sought to correct errors. One of the most frequently quoted writings about the beginnings of the Cincinnati.)
Thomas Jefferson to General Washington, April 16, 1784.
(In answer to Washington's letter of April 8, 1784.)
Thomas Jefferson to General Gates, May 7, 1784.
Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, December 28, 1794.
Thomas Jefferson to Joel Barlow, October 8, 1809.
Thomas Jefferson to General Washington, November 14, 1786.
Thomas Jefferson to Martin Van Buren, June 29, 1824.
Benjamin Franklin to Mrs. Sarah Bache (his daughter), January 26, 1784.
John Adams to the Marquis de LaFayette, March 8, 1784.
John Adams to the Marquis de LaFayette, March 28, 1784.
The Marquis de LaFayette to John Adams, June 25, 1784.
John Adams to the Cincinnati of Rhode Island, July 4, 1798.
John Adams to the Cincinnati of South Carolina, September 15, 1798.
John Adams to Charles Spencer, March 24, 1784.
Samuel Adams to Ibridge Gerry, February 25, 1784.
Samuel Adams to John Adams, April 16, 1784.
Samuel Adams to Elbridge Gerry, February 25, 1784.
John Quincy Adams to John Adams, June 30, 1787.
John Jay to Gouverneur Morris, February 10, 1784.
The list, of course, could be greatly extended.

EARLY OPPOSITION TO THE CINCINNATI

Wily old Sam Adams wrote to John that the Cincinnati was become very unpopular in Boston, and gave it as his opinion that *military* men might try to *enforce* their resolutions, and not be content merely to adopt them. (Letter of April 16, 1784, to John Adams, "Writings of Samuel Adams," IV, p. 296.) John Quincy Adams wrote in glee to his father, on June 30, 1787, commenting on the recent election in Massachusetts: "Mr. Adams [meaning Samuel] has been much opposed to General Lincoln, and had sufficient influence to prevent his being chosen even as a councilor, because he is a member of the Society of the Cincinnati." And he continued, "It is strange that no one dares attack this institution openly. It is daily acquiring strength, and will infallibly become a body dangerous, if not fatal to the Constitution." ("Writings of John Q. Adams," I, p. 33.) By their own words we know that none of the Adamses had the courage to attack the Cincinnati openly.

John Jay wrote to Gouverneur Morris, on February 10, 1784, that the Cincinnati "does not either do credit to those who formed and patronized, or to those who suffered it." ("Corresp. of John Jay," III, p. 111.) In another letter, dated Paris, March, 1784, Jay said that if the Cincinnati "took well in the States, he would not care if the Revolutionary War had succeeded or not." Samuel Adams wrote to Elbridge Gerry that he was "happy in having adopted an opinion of the Cincinnati so similar to what I found years to be." ("Writings of Samuel Adams," IV, p. 298.)

Thomas Jefferson was perhaps the most influential of the society's enemies. In Virginia, he wrote to General Gates, on May 7, 1784, there was opposition to the Cincinnati; "the division is precisely into civil and military," he added. (Ford, "Writings of Jefferson," IV, p. 347.) He felt that since the Congress had created no orders, that the members of the Cincinnati should not have created one. It was to General Washington, himself, that Mr. Jefferson addressed his most lengthy objections, "because whatever may be the ultimate fate of the Cincinnati, and in its course it draws to it some degree of disapprobation, I have wished to see you standing on ground separated from it, and that the character which will be handed to future ages as the head of our revolution may in no instance be compromitted in subordinate altercations." (Letter of April 16, 1784, Ford, "Writings of Jefferson," IV, p. 323.)

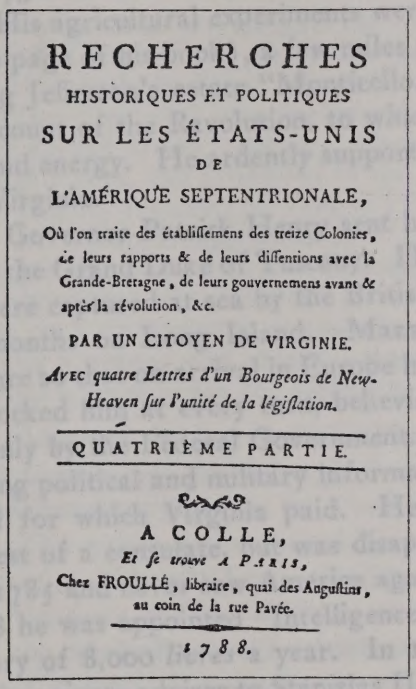
Mr. Jefferson was opposed to orders in general, but particularly "the society of the Cincinnati, *a self-created* one, carving out for itself hereditary distinctions, lowering over our Constitution eternally, meeting together in all parts of the Union, periodically, with closed doors, accumulating a capital in their separate treasury, corresponding secretly & regularly, & of which society the very persons denouncing the democrats are themselves the fathers, founders, & high officers. Their sight must be perfectly dazzled by the glittering of crowns & coronets, not to see the extravagance of the proposition. . . . . I have never heard, or heard of, a single expression or opinion which did not condemn it as an inexcusable aggression." (Letter to James Madison, December 28, 1794, Ford, "Writings of Jeffersons," VI, p. 517.)

Jefferson felt that the Cincinnati was contrary to the "letter of some of our Constitutions and to the spirit of all of them," and in opposition to "the natural equality of man." He declared himself to be "an enemy of the Institution from the first moment of its conception," considered "their meetings objectionable," and "the charitable part of the institution still more likely to do mischief." He advised the members to "distribute their funds, renounce their existence," and "melt up their eagles." *(Ibid.,* IV, p. 176.)

These Jeffersonian attacks on the Society of the Cincinnati were answered in Major Henry Lee's book "Observations on the Writings of Thomas Jefferson" (Philadelphia, 1839.) This Major Lee was the son of "Lighthorse Harry" Lee, as we like to call him in Virginia, and of course the brother of General Robert E. Lee. Major Lee defended the Cincinnati with ability from the aspersions cast by Jefferson, who is said to have disliked the intimacy which existed between General Washington and Colonel Henry Lee. The younger Henry Lee, sometimes called "Blackhorse Harry" to distinguish him from his father, was an officer of the United States Army and served with distinction in the War of 1812, being later Consul General to the Barbary States.

Rare Ben Franklin, who heard in France of the newly-formed Cincinnati, wrote an amusing and characteristic letter to his daughter on January 29, 1784, in which he indulged in mild sarcasm about the new order of hereditary knights, and showed by a table that the blood of the original member would be so diluted from generation to gen-

eration as time goes on, that in a century or so the descendant would be far removed indeed from his patriotic propositus. He also commented, as did many another writer of the day, on the poor Latin in the motto: "Omnia Relinquit Servare Rempublicam," and said that their Eagle looked more like a turkey. But he added he saw no particular objection to this for the turkey is an honest bird, though a little vain and silly, while the eagle is a bird of bad moral character who does not get his living honestly and is, moreover, a rank coward. The old philosopher wound up by the thought that while the Cincinnati is really unimportant, and "if people can be pleased with small matters, it is a pity but that they should have them." (Bigelow, "Works of Franklin," VIII, p. 438.) When he returned to America he accepted honorary membership in the Society. It should perhaps be added here, that it was the opinion of some of our older members that if the society had made Jefferson, the Adamses, Jay and Gerry honorary members, not to mention Burke, there would have been no further opposition to the Cincinnati!



RECHERCHES

HISTORIQUES ET POLITIQUES

SUR LES ÉTATS-UNIS

DE

L'AMÉRIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE,

Où l'on traite des établissemens des treize Colonies, de leurs rapports & de leurs dissentions avec la Grande-Bretagne, de leurs gouvernemens avant & après la révolution, &c.

PAR UN CITOYEN DE VIRGINIE.

Avec quatre Lettres d'un Bourgeois de New-Heaven sur l'unité de la législation.

QUATRIÈME PARTIE.

A COLLE,

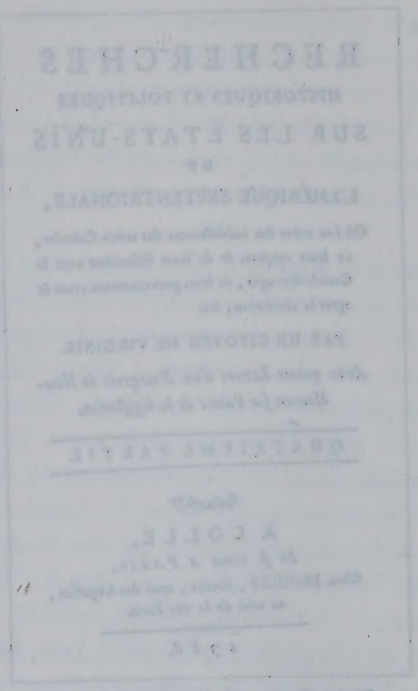
Et se trouve A PARIS,

Chez FROULLÉ, libraire, quai des Augustins, au coin de la rue Pavée.

1788.

Title Page of the Volume of Philip Mazzei's History of the United States, Which Includes the Hostile Chapter on the Society of the Cincinnati, inspired by the views of his patron, Thomas Jefferson. Paris, 1788. (From the Collection of Col. Bryce Metcalf, Vice-President General of the Society of the Cincinnati.)

The objections of Mr. Jefferson to the Cincinnati were reflected in the history of the United States by his loyal follower, Philip Mazzei. This gifted man was the author of "Recherches Historiques et Politiques sur les Etats-Unis de l'Amérique Septentrionale," published in four volumes in Paris in 1788. A chapter in the fourth volume considers the Society of the Cincinnati and invites the reader's attention to the dangers as envisaged by Jefferson.



Mazzei was successively a physician, a merchant, a horticulturist, an author and the agent of Virginia in Europe during the American Revolution. Born in 1730 at Poggio a Caiano, Italy, he studied surgery at Florence, practiced his profession at Smyrna for three years; then removed to London, where he was a wine merchant for eighteen years. In 1773 he went to Virginia to introduce the culture of grapes, olives, etc. His agricultural experiments were carried out at "Colle" (see the title page of his book), a few miles south of Charlottesville, and adjoining Jefferson's estate "Monticello." It was not a success chiefly on account of the Revolution, to which Mazzei devoted most of his time and energy. He ardently supported religious and political freedom in Virginia.

In 1779 Governor Patrick Henry sent him to Europe to borrow money from the Grand Duke of Tuscany. He, with his wife and stepdaughter, were captured at sea by the British and he was imprisoned for three months on Long Island. Mazzei destroyed his papers before capture so that on arrival in Europe he had no authority to act. Franklin blocked him at every turn, believing that money should be borrowed only by the Federal Government. So Mazzei busied himself gathering political and military information when he sent to Jefferson, and for which Virginia paid. He returned to America in 1783 in quest of a consulate, but was disappointed. He returned to Europe in 1785 and never saw America again.

In 1788 he was appointed "Intelligencer to the King of Poland" with a salary of 8,000 *livres* a year. In 1792 he went to Warsaw, where he was private adviser to Stanislas II, until the second partition of Poland forced his retirement. In 1802 the Tsar of Russia began paying him the pension of 1,200 *rubles* which the Polish government had promised him, and this he received until his death in 1816 at Pisa, where he is buried. He was a naturalized citizen of Virginia and later a naturalized Pole.

His book on the United States failed to gain popularity, because, says Faÿ, of its lack of extravagance. In 1813 he published his "Mémoirs" in Italian. This extraordinarily versatile man carried on an active correspondence with Jefferson, Madison, Thomas Adams and other Virginians. His letter of April 24, 1796, from Jefferson, became famous in the history of American political controvrsy. *(Cf.* "Dict. of Amer. Biogr.," XII, p. 470.)

British visitors from the earliest days have enjoyed writing down their impressions of America. Here is one by Charles William Janson, of London, from his book "The Stranger in America," written in 1807, from which I have already quoted. This story, like the other, was based on Brackenridge's "Modern Chivalry," a work that will be considered presently:

A gentleman traveling on horseback, attended by an Irish servant, overtook one of the Cincinnati on his route to attend the yearly meeting, with the Eagle, the emblem of his order, at his breast. The gentleman entered into conversation, and alighting at the same inn, they agreed to sup together. The people of the inn had not seen the badge before, and prompted by the never-failing curiosity of the country, eagerly enquired of Teague [the servant] what was the meaning of the ornament appended to a ribbon worn by one of the guests. Teague, it seems, was also ignorant, but unwilling to betray his want of knowledge, and, like the clown in the pantomime, ever ready to turn each circumstance to the advantage of his stomach, replied that it was a goose; and that the meaning was, that the gentleman preferred a roast goose for supper to all other dishes!

After all, as Ben Franklin himself had observed, the badge was not particularly like the eagle in nature, and may as well have been mistaken for a goose as for a turkey!

The public fears excited by opinions of men in such powerful places could hardly have helped being reflected in the legislative halls of Congress and the thirteen states. A committee of both Houses of the Massachusetts Legislature reported: "That the Society of the Cincinnati is unjustifiable, and if not properly discountenanced, may be dangerous to the peace, liberty, and safety of the United States in general and this Commonwealth in particular." And it was further recommended that measures be taken to protect the people from this menace. (New York "Packet," March 25, 1784.) Watchful and suspicious Sam Adams was apparently to have his way.

The Virginia Legislature did not, apparently, consider taking any action against the Cincinnati. This may have been due to General Washington's being its President General, and possibly because the Virginia Society early abolished the principle of hereditary succession as we shall presently see.

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In the North Carolina Legislature a bill was introduced "to render incapable all such persons that are now, or hereafter may be of,

or belong to, the Society of the Cincinnati of having a seat in either House of the General Assembly of this State." ("N. C. State Recs.," XIX, p. 743.)

The public feeling in Connecticut may be understood by the following letter published in Freeman's "Chronicle" (Hartford) and repeated in "The Independent Chronicle" of Boston, April 1, 1784:

" . . . . You must be stupid beyond description to imagine such absurdities can be palmed off upon the people without detection; and to think that the fortune and perseverance that has baffled the power and intrigues of Britain, will now be cajoled by such a farce of philanthropy, and tamely stand to have your manacles riveted. It is a vain amusement. Give up your darling and do not hug it to death, the idol will cost too dear a sacrifice if indulged. The manes of departed heroes are disturbed, the feelings of a people are agitated, the convulsion extends to the basis of our constitution: Such avarice, such encroachment, such plundering of honor is too egregious to be borne. He that plays foul the most dexterously is sure to be undone; by making too much of your honor you will bring it to nothing, and the natural consequence will be that your loud pretension to it, is because you suspect your own title. Pray be advised to give up the pursuit, and not plunge a dagger in the bosom of the country that gave you existence, is the voice of the PEOPLE.

Opposition in Connecticut was sufficiently weighty to prevent the Legislature granting the Society the charter for which they so often petitioned. (*Cf.* "Papers of Conn. Soc. of Cin.," 1916.)

The statement has frequently been made that Rhode Island disfranchised the members of the Society of the Cincinnati. (Cf. McMasters "History of the People of the U. S."). The only contemporary authority on this that I have found is Freeman's "Journal" of Philadelphia for April 28, 1784. This newspaper says: "Rhode Island is determined to disfranchise any and every person who is a member of the Order of the Cincinnati, and render them incapable of holding any post of honor and trust in the government." Even this merely says that Rhode Island *intended* to take this harsh step. As a matter of fact Archibald Crary, an original member of the Society, was a member of the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1784, 1785 and 1786, and became its Speaker in 1797. William Bradford, Jeremiah Olney, Benjamin Bourne, William Jones, and other members of the Cincinnati were members of the Rhode Island Legislature at the

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period of the Society's unpopularity in certain quarters. Original members held other high offices in Rhode Island, *e. g.,* Thomas Arnold was Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Henry Sherburne was State Treasurer, etc. Obviously these men would not have been allowed to hold such offices had there been any actual disfranchisement of the Cincinnati members, and probably not if this were seriously threatened. So we must conclude that Rhode Island took no radical action against the society.

General Washington was troubled at all this criticism. He was torn between his affection and loyalty to his officers and their society of which they had unanimously chosen him the head, and his respect for public opinion. Since the most powerful of the opponents was Jefferson, the President General wrote him. Moreover, Mr. Jefferson, then Minister to France, might be able to tell him of the feeling in Europe towards the new American order. Jefferson had written a long account of the Cincinnati to be used in a French encyclopædia, and one would suppose was entirely familiar with the facts. He left no argument against the Cincinnati unused, saying that he had never heard a person in Europe "who did not consider it dishonorable and destructive to our governments." Specifically he found fault with the meetings, which he conceived to be occasions for schemes to separate the military from the civil, and to make claims against the government. Mr. Jefferson's objections should, perhaps, have been held over until these modern days of the bonus. Secondly, he thought that the fund, derived from a month's pay of each member, would in time be used by hereditary members to the national disadvantage, and by attempting to live on a small annuity, they would lead away from the paths of industry. Surely only a mind like that of Mr. Jefferson's could have thought of such an objection. He thereupon urged that the members cease this miserable attempt to take advantage of their countrymen. (Ford, "Writings of Jefferson," *loc. cit.)*

General Washington likewise consulted his most trusted officers as to the real opinions of the people of the country about the Cincinnati. On March 9, 1784, LaFayette wrote him from Paris: "Most of the Americans here are violent against our Association. Wadsworth must be excepted and Dr. Franklin says little. But Jay, Adams, and all the others warmly blame the army. You easily guess I am not remiss in opposing them." (LaFayette, "Mémoirs," II, p. 82.) Stout

old General Knox, lately chief of artillery, wrote the President General on February 21, 1784, from Boston:

The Cincinnati appears (however groundlessly) to be an object of jealousy. The idea is, that it has been created by a foreign influence in order to change our form of government; and this is strengthened by a letter from some of our ministers abroad. Burke's pamphlet has had its full operation. The cool, dispassionate men seem to approve of the institution generally, but dislike the hereditary descent. The two branches of the legislature of the State have chosen a committee "to inquire into any associations or combinations which have [been] or may be formed to introduce *undue* distinctions in the community, and which may have a tendency to create a race of hereditary nobility contrary to the confederation of the United States and the spirit of the Constitution of this Commonwealth." They have not reported, and perhaps will not. The same sentiments pervade New England.

"It was," says Chief Justice John Marshall, "impossible for Washington to view with indifference this state of the public feeling. Bound to the officers of his army by the strictest ties of esteem and affection, conscious of their merits and assured of their attachment to his person, he was alive to everything which might affect their reputation or their interests. However innocent the institution might be in itself, or however laudable its real objects, if the impression it made on the public mind was such as to draw a line of distinction between the military men of America and their fellow-citizens, he was earnest in his wishes to adopt such measures as would efface that impression. However ill-founded the public prejudice might be, he thought this a case in which they ought to be respected." (Marshall, "Life of Washington," IV, p. 136.)

Thé Chevalier de La Luzerne, first French Minister to the United States, wrote the Count de Vergennes, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in April, 1784:

The institution of the Society of Cincinnatus gives every day more ombrage to the inhabitants of the North. They do not wish to suffer any distinctions to exist. They find them incompatible with republican government, dangerous to liberty, and I think their fears are not chimerical. They threaten to exclude the members of the Order from public office. It is in effect an institution diametrically opposed to the principles of equality and to the jealousy natural to these republicans. The General in Chief, without forseeing these oppositions,

has done all in his power to give firmness to this institution. He will preside at the grand congress which the members of this Order will hold in Philadelphia next month, and, pressed from one quarter by the publicity which has attended his becoming its patron, and from another by the fear of becoming unpopular in supporting an institution abhorred in several States, I think that he is much perplexed as to the course that he should pursue." (Letter in archives of the French Foreign Office, 27 États-Unis, fol. 282; quoted by Contenson, "Soc. des Cinc. de France," 1924, pp. 40-42.)

Luzerne evidently understood General Washington's position perfectly. The Chevalier was one of the seven Frenchmen made members by the terms of the institution itself. The Count de Vergennes was later elected to honorary membership.

At the first general meeting of the society, held in Philadelphia a year after its institution, the whole matter was given thorough consideration. General Washington had urged a full attendance of delegates. "It would give me pleasure," he wrote on February 20, 1784, to General Knox, "if the first General Meeting were a very full one."

When, therefore, the delegates of the thirteen State societies assembled on May 4, 1784, one of the first considerations was that of the feelings of the country. Major Winthrop Sargent, of Massachusetts, has left us an interesting journal of what took place at this first Triennial. Immediately after the reading of the Institution,

The President then arose;—express'd the opposition of the State of Virginia and other States;—observ'd that it had become violent and formidable, and called for serious consideration;—desired of the members of the several States to declare the ideas which prevailed in their countries with regard to our Institution, and the various manners which they had pursued to obtain this knowledge.

Connecticut, by Colonel Humphreys;—a very general disapprobation of the people.

Massachusetts, by General Knox;—expressed similar sentiments —with this difference, that some very sincerely wish its existence, but with alterations material.

New York, by Colonel Smith;—declared no opposition.

Delaware, by Mr. Tilton;—informed that the principal and indeed only enemies of the Cincinnati were among the class of people denominated Tories.

Colonel White, from South Carolina;—gave it as his opinion, that almost all the various classes in the State from whence he came, were opposed to the Institution in its present form.

Georgia, by Major Cuthbert;—declared the very opposite.

Captain Dayton arose—and informed the Meeting that he did not know the sentiments of the People generally in the State of Jersey, but that it was the determination of the Society to preserve and support its dignity.

Pennsylvania, by Governor Dickison;—as an objection of the People's, pointed out the hereditary part.

New Hampshire, by Colonel Dearbourne;—declared that the opinions of the State were very generally in opposition to the Institution on its present Establishment. ("Mems. Hist. Soc. of Penn.," VI, 1858, pp. 59-115.)

The states of Rhode Island, Maryland and North Carolina did not report, it being thought that their delegates were not present at this stage of the meeting.

The President General, in confidence, "introduced a report of a Committee of Congress, that no person holding an hereditary title or order of nobility should be eligible to citizenship in the new State they are about to establish, and declared that he knew this to be levelled at our Institution." Such a provision is now a part of the Constitution of the United States, adopted three years later.

Discussion was lengthy and complete, and resulted in the adoption of a document called "The Altered and Amended Institution." The chief changes were the abolition of hereditary succession to membership and the placing of the several State society funds in the keeping of the respective Legislatures. The new Institution was much shorter than the original and in its language an effort was made to avoid words that might arouse further opposition.

In a letter to Samuel Vaughan, dated 30 November, 1785, General Washington said, commenting on Burke's pamphlet: "With those who are disposed to cavil, or who have the itch of writing strongly upon them, nothing can be made to suit their palates. The best way, therefore, to disconcert and defeat them, is to take no notice of their publications. All else is food for declamation. There is not, I conceive, an unbiassed mind, that would refuse the officers of the late army the right of associating for the purpose of establishing a fund for the support of the poor and distressed of their fraternity, when many of them, it is well known, are reduced to their last shifts by the ungenerous conduct of their country in not adopting more vig-

orous measures to render their certificates productive." (Ford, "Writings of Washington," X, p. 16.)

General Washington was pleased that the first general meeting of the society had altered and amended the Institution in keeping with his recommendations. On August 31, 1785, he wrote from Mount Vernon to General St. Clair:

> I am perfectly convinced, that, if the first institution of this Society had not been parted with, ere this we should have had the country in an uproar, and a line of separation drawn between the Society and their fellow-citizens. The alterations, which took place at the last general meeting, have quieted the clamors, which in many of the States were rising to a great height; but I have not heard yet of the incorporation of any Society by the State to which it belongs, which is an evidence, in my mind, that the jealousies of the people are rather asleep than removed on this occasion. (Washington's Corresp. Books, MS. Div., Libr. of Congr.)

It was necessary, however, for the altered and amended Institution to be ratified by the State societies, before becoming effective. Opinion was divided. Let us see how each branch of the society voted:

The State society which most actively opposed the change in the Institution was that of New Hampshire, and to it we are all indebted for vigorous action which probably saved the hereditary succession to membership. Other State societies were likewise opposed to the change, but were not so articulate.

On April 16, 1787, the New Hampshire society voted: "That the abolition of hereditary succession adopted by the General Meeting is so repugnant to the design of the Institution and so destructive to the principles on which it was originally founded that it ought not to be agreed to," and there was a lengthy argument as to the desirability of the society's adhering to the original plan of organization and purpose and not, by changing them, to admit the accusations of the society's enemies. (MS. mins. of N. H. Soc. of Cin., quoted in "Papers of the Conn. Soc. of Cin., 1783-1807," pub. 1916.)

The Massachusetts society at its annual meeting in Boston, July 4, 1784, accepted the changed Institution, but the meeting of July 4, 1786, reconsidered this action, the reason being given that the society desired to perpetuate itself by hereditary admissions. On July 4, 1799, it declared that "as a number of other State Societies did

not accept the same, the Society rests on the original Institution of A. D. 1783." ("Mems. of Mass. Cin., 1873," p. 62.)

The Rhode Island society at first acceded to the proposed amended Institution, and then formally rescinded its vote and thereafter repeatedly declared its adhesion to the Institution as originally established. (A. B. Gardiner, MS. Hist. of R. I. Soc. of Cin., copy in possession of W. S. Thomas, Pres. of the N. Y. State Soc. of Cin.)

The Connecticut Society at its annual meeting in the State House at Hartford on July 7, 1784, laid the report of its delegates at the "late General Meeting" on the table. On July 4, 1785, the report on the proposed Institution was considered, but no action was taken. On September 12, 1786, it was voted to "postpone discussion and determination on the Amended Institution." Finally, on July 7, 1795, the changes were ratified. ("Recs. of Conn. State Soc. of Cin.," pub. by Conn. Hist. Soc., 1916.)

The New York society declined to take action at its annual meeting in New York City on July 6, 1784. At the annual meeting on July 4, 1786, the report presented by Colonel Alexander Hamilton, who was destined one day to succeed General Washington as President General of the Cincinnati, was adopted. Colonel Hamilton was chairman of the committee to whom had been referred the proposed changed Institution. The committee stated that "though they highly approve of the motives which dictated these alterations, they are of opinion that it would be inexpedient to adopt them," adding that hereditary succession was desirable and that it were improper to allow the legislatures to dispose of their funds. One of the principal objections was "because the Institution as proposed to be altered would contain in itself no certain provision for the continuance of the Society." (Schuyler, "Hist. of N. Y. State Soc. of the Cin., 1886," p. 91.)

The New Jersey society took no notice of the changes until its annual meeting in New Brunswick on July 5, 1785, when it postponed action until the following year. On July 4, 1786, the society adopted the altered and amended Institution after a considerable debate and by a small majority. At the same time, however, it unanimously agreed that the society ought to be perpetuated and also put forth a circular letter in which, in vigorous language, it defended the principles of the original Institution. At the annual meeting at Trenton

on July 5, 1790, the society, recognizing that the changed Institution had not become effective, authorized its delegates to the next general meeting to agree upon and finally establish such alterations as might be found necessary. ("Excerpts of Proc., Soc. of Cin. in N. J. 1906," pp. 172, *et seq.)*

The Pennsylvania society accepted the new Institution at its adjourned meeting held in Philadelphia, July 9, 1784. At the same time they adopted the report of the committee composed of Major-General Arthur St. Clair, Major-General Anthony Wayne, and Colonel Thomas Hartley, that by the proposed alterations "the ground of the Society had been too much narrowed . . . . ," and in order to perpetuate it, the committee proposed certain additions and amendments. On July 6, 1789, the society resolved that it should consider its original Constitution as the criterion by which to act until all alteration of said Constitution shall be unanimously agreed to by the several State Societies." ("Inst. of Soc. of Cin. Orig. of State Soc. of Penn., 1863," p. 36.)

The Delaware society did not approve the amended Institution, and at a special meeting held at Duck Creek Cross Roads on April 7, 1788, instructed its delegates to the next general meeting to insist positively on an inheritable succession in some form. (Bellas, "Hist. Del. State Soc. of Cin.," 1895, p. 22.)

The Maryland society unanimously approved the altered and amended Institution at its meeting at Annapolis on July 6, 1784. At a special meeting at the same place on October 20, 1787, the society appointed Major-General William Smallwood, Governor of Maryland, and others, as delegates to the next general meeting, and recommended to them "as the earnest wish" of the Maryland members, "that the Original Institution of the Society be adhered to as nearly as possible." The Maryland society renewed these instructions to its delegates until the subject was finally dismissed by the general society. ("Reg. Soc. of Cin. of Md.," 1897, p. 38.)

The Virginia society not only ratified the changed Institution at its meeting in Fredericksburg on October 5, 1784, but even after it failed of general ratification, never returned to the principles of hereditary succession. Thus no hereditary members were admitted in Virginia during the lives of the founders. (Hume, "Hist. of Va. Cin., 1933," p. 76.)

The North Carolina Society at its annual meeting at Fayetteville on July 4, 1784, adopted the altered Institution, and again ratified the changes at the meeting on January 10, 1785. Its permanent fund was then offered to the State, in compliance with the provisions of the new Institution. The North Carolina General Assembly, however, declined to take charge of it. (Davis, "Hist. of N. C. Soc. of Cin.," 1896, p. 94.)

The South Carolina society at a special meeting in Charleston on July 27, 1784, adopted the amended Institution, and so voted again on April 3, 1786, stating that it did so out of respect to popular opposition and not because of any sense of self accusation. On October 2, 1786, the society instructed its delegates to the next general meeting to obtain modifications to the changed Institution so as to permit the election of honorary members and the filling of vacancies occasioned by death, resignation or expulsion. On February 28, 1787, the delegates were instructed, since the changes in the Institution had not been generally accepted, to agree to such alterations as may be recommended by a majority of the representatives of the societies then present. ("Inst. of Soc. of Cin. and Rules, Etc., of State Soc. of S. C., 1880," and MS. minutes of the Soc.)

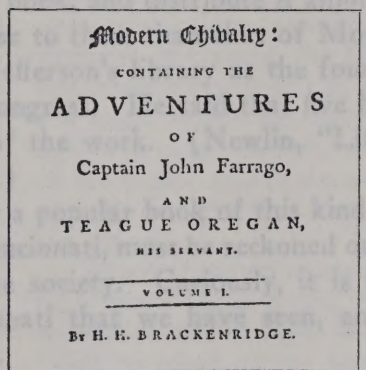
The Georgia society at a special meeting in Savannah on October 19, 1784, ratified the proposed new Institution, but at a special meeting on April 15, 1790, finding that the changes were far from being adopted or approved by many of the State societies, because no sufficient method therein provided for the perpetual succession of members "resolved to repeal their former vote of adoption, whereby the sense of this Society was plainly and fully expressed to be in favor of the Original Constitution." The delegates from Georgia to the next general meeting were instructed to vote accordingly. (Foster, MS. Hist. of G. Cin.)

The society in France on July 4, 1884, accepted the New Institution, as the presumed wish of the members in America, but "at the same time the meeting declared itself in favor of the hereditary transmission of the title of member, ... and expressed the opinion that this right should be reëstablished." (Contenson, "Soc. des Cinc. de France," 1934, p. 48.)

Thus we see that New Hampshire, New York, and Delaware opposed the changes from the beginning. Connecticut, Virginia and

North Carolina voted in favor of the new Institution and never rescinded such action. The other eight State societies accepted the altered and amended Institution at first, but subsequently reconsidered the matter and were in favor of retaining the original Institution of 1783. So the changes failed of ratification, and the Institution has come down to us, hereditary succession and all.

One of the cleverest opponents of the Society of the Cincinnati was a Scot, the Rev. Hugh Henry Brackenridge, who was likewise a jurist, and who rose to the Supreme Bench of Pennsylvania. The Cincinnati seemed to draw the fire of eccentric judges with early theological training and brief military service! At the same time Thomas McKean, Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, accepted honorary membership and made a point of wearing the Eagle in public, considering himself "highly honored and would contribute all in his power to advance the honor and dignity of the Society." It was McKean, when later elected Governor of Pennsylvania, who appointed Brackenridge to the Supreme Court of the State.



Modern Chivalry:

CONTAINING THE

ADVENTURES

OF

Captain John Farrago,

AND

TEAGUE OREGAN,

HIS SERVANT.

VOLUME I.

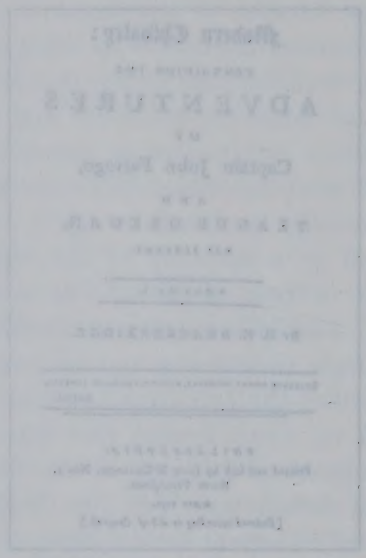
By H. H. BRACKENRIDGE.

QUICQUID AGUNT HOMINES, NOSTRI, FARRAGO LIBELLI.
Juvenal.

PHILADELPHIA:
Printed and sold by JOHN M'CULLOCH, No. 1, North Third-Street.
M.DCC XCII.
[Entered according to Act of Congress.]

Title Page of the First Edition of *Modern Chivalry*, by Judge Hugh Henry Brackenridge, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Vol. I contains the chapter against the Society of the Cincinnati. The work includes, also, parts of *The Modern Chevalier*, a long Hudibrastic poem partly devoted to satirizing the Cincinnati. Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1792. (From the Rare Book Department of the Library of Congress.)

Brackenridge's chief claim to fame, though he was a prolific writer, is his four-volume work, "Modern Chivalry," based on an earlier poem called "The Modern Chevalier," which he had written in 1788-89. "Modern Chivalry" was a widely read prose work published a volume at a time between 1792 and 1797. It is chiefly concerned with the "Adventures of Captain John Farrago and Teague O'Regan, His Servant." "Modern Chivalry," Brackenridge himself said, is "formed on the model of Xenophon, and Swift's 'Tale of a Tub,' and 'Gulliver's Travels.' It is simple, natural, various and forcible" (1, 152). Of it John Quincy Adams remarked in 1847: "I formed a pleasant acquaintance with Captain Farrago and his man



Teague, at their first appearance, half a century since. . . . . [They] are legitimate descendants, on one side, from the Knight of La Mancha and his Squire Sancho, on the other side from Sir Hudibras and his man Ralpho. . . . . " (Wilson McCandless, "Ex-President John Quincy Adams in Pittsburgh in 1843.")

"Modern Chivalry" appeared in several editions, the last being in 1851, thirty-five years after the author's death. Judge Brackenridge was proud of the popularity of his book, and thought that an even wider circulation might check the verbosity of members of Congress! "Why is it," he inquired, "that Congress do not buy up an edition of my book, and distribute it among the members? It would be of more use to them than that of Montecello"—referring to the purchase of Jefferson's library as the foundation of what is now the Library of Congress. He said that five book-sellers had made their fortune out of the work. (Newlin, "Life and Writings of H. H. Brackenridge.)

Obviously a popular book of this kind, in which there were many jibes at the Cincinnati, must be reckoned one of the most potent of the attacks on the society. Curiously, it is unmentioned in any sketch of the Cincinnati that we have seen, and merits a somewhat full consideration.

Brackenridge's objections, as set forth by Captain Farrago in "Modern Chivalry" are:

The principal objection that lies with me against your institution, is that which lies against all partial institutions whatsoever; they cut men from the common mass, and alienate their affections from the whole, concentrating their attachments to a particular point and interest. A circumstance of this kind is unfavorable to general philanthropy, giving a temporary and artificial credit to those who are of the body, amongst themselves; so that while some lend characters, others borrow; and the individuals do not stand on the natural basis of their own merit. On this principle, I do not approve much of clubs and societies, unless in the case of some humane or charitable institution; or for the purpose of carrying on some beneficial work or improvement. I do not know that in your convening annually together, you have any object in view of this nature. I have not heard of any bridges you have built, or canals dug, or locks made for the purpose of facilitating navigation. I don't see of what use your institution is, unless it be, that your pronouncing an oration now and then, may be favorable to eloquence. But of this I much doubt, as such

abstract discourses usually degenerate into commonplace. The great object of an oration is, to persuade the judgement, or affect the passions. In this case, the judgement is already persuaded, affections already gained. . . . .

Here is another passage. The scene is an inn at which Captain Farrago is dining with a member of the Society of the Cincinnati—"a Cincinnati gentleman," as Brackenridge terms him:

. . . . The evening passed in hilarity; and the conversation turned again on the Cincinnati order; but particularly what may be called the arms of the institution, *viz.,* Britania, represented as a fine woman, with her bosom bare, affrighted, and Cincinnatus an accoutred knight, attacking her thus unarmed, as St. George did the dragon; the eagle, the bird of Jove, in the mean time, grasping the lightning in his claws; an image that would seem unnatural: Whereas the eagle might be represented in the clouds near Jove, where the lightning might be left to work its forked course, without the handling of the eagle; and in the other figure, Cincinnatus might raise his lance against the lion that supports the crown, not against the goddess of the island.

From these strictures, which the captain, without pretending to be a connoisseur, made, the transition was easy to a criticism on the motto of the badge, *viz., Omnia reliquit, servare, rempublicam.* "Not to speak of the bad Latin, this does not at all express that in which the merit of Cincinnatus consisted. (It should be the gerund instead of the infinitive. The verb *servare,* may be translated to *serve* by the *sound* only and not the sense). It was not in his leaving everything to accept the commission of the Roman Senate; but in resigning his commission, and, the work done, going to his plough again. His praise would have been expressed better by the phrase of *Victor ad aratrum redit.* In fact, it cannot apply well to our army; most of our officers not having much to leave when they accepted their commissions; but discovered a Cincinnatus-like disposition, in returning after war to the employments of civil life. It is true, there would have been less tinsel, and more bullion, in the patriotism of retiring without a badge, as Cincinnatus did; but it is a thing that can do little harm and it is pleasing to indulge a whim.

It may doubtless be said, that there were officers who left the plough, and fought and returned to it, as well, as those who are within the limitations of the institution, and entitled to a badge; that the troops who had served a short enlistment, and militia persons, at least those who fought a little, were not wholly destitute of some claim to the badge of merit. I have been in a battle or two myself, but lay no

particular claim to superior merit on that account. Even those who lost property might be said to suffer, and advance pretensions to the reward of honor. Not that all of them should claim gold medals, or even silver; but some brass, some copper, pewter, a bit of tin, or pot-metal, just as the specific value of their services might entitle them. Perhaps while some wore it at the breast, others might be enjoined to wear it at the breeches pocket; and thus, as well as by the point from which appendant, as by the bob itself, designate the proportion of their honor."

The comments on the "arms" of the Cincinnati refers in reality to the design of the society's diploma. Thereon are depicted the knight in full armor, representing liberty rather than Cincinnatus, Britannia with the crown falling from her head in the moment of departure for her fleet, the British lion in a cowed attitude, etc. The late Ambassador Jusserand, an enthusiastic member of the Cincinnati, once commented on the idea of the armed knight driving a defenseless woman into the sea! The design, like that of the Eagle, was drawn by Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, the French military engineer who was later to lay out the city of Washington. The criticism of the Latin of the order's motto was general. To this, and to the inappropriate concept of American officers assuming credit for their supposed resemblance to Cincinnatus, the judge referred in his Hudibrastic poem, of which presently.

Brackenridge was opposed to the honorary members of the Cincinnati as well as those who had earned membership by their military service. He probably considered the honorary members objectionable in the same way as the members of the American Philosophical Society, which Ben Franklin had founded in 1727 in Philadelphia. Indeed he is more scornful of the American Philosophical Society than even of the Cincinnati. In one passage he makes his hero decline the honor of membership in the American Philosophical Society, and give it instead to his illiterate Irish servant Teague, the butt of most of the jokes in "Modern Chivalry." To the honorary Cincinnati members, Brackenridge, through the words of his character, Captain Farrago, manages to convey his objections:

After this, some things were said on the subject of introducing honorary members; against which the captain declared himself: "That everything ought to be preserved *sui generis;* as nature makes

particular claim to superior merit on that account. Even those who lost property might be said to scarce, and advance pretensions to the reward of honor. Not that all of them should claim gold medals, or even silver; but some brass, some copper, pewter, a bit of tin, or pot-metal, just as the specific value of their services might entitle them. Perhaps while some wore it at the breast, others might be enjoined to wear it at the breeches pocket; and thus, as well as by the point from which appendant, as by the bob itself, designate the proportion of their honor."

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After this, some things were said on the subject of introducing honorary members; against which the captain declared himself: "That everything ought to be preserved for power; as nature makes

no honorary animals; but all are of the species, or take not the name; a bear is a real bear, a sheep is a sheep; and there is no commixture of name, where there is a difference of nature. But it did not appear to be of any great consequence, one way or the other; for the order would never come to any great head, as there was no opposition given which is necessary to keep alive attachment to what is arbitrary and founded not in utility but caprice. For as the fire dies without air, so whim without contradiction." The officer was a man of liberality and good sense, and acknowledged the truth of this. But the evening being now far spent, candles were called for, and they went to bed. ("Modern Chivalry," edit. 1851, I, p. 97.)

The reverend judge's statements, above quoted, were written in Pittsburgh in 1793. At that time the opposition to the Cincinnati aroused by Judge Burke's book had about subsided and as Judge Brackenridge was so far removed from the center of population of the country, possibly his objections were *sui generis*, to use his own words. His statement that there was no "contradiction" to the Cincinnati, which must therefore die from want of such stimulus, would bear out this thought.

Brackenridge's Hudibrastic poem, "The Modern Chevalier," on which "Modern Chivalry" was founded, is even harder to find than the latter work. It was first printed in Volume III of the latter, a pamphlet of ninety-three pages, published in Pittsburgh in 1793. This was the first literary work both written and published west of the Alleghany Mountains. Certain passages from the poem were reproduced in the 1815 edition of "Modern Chivalry," including the attack on the Cincinnati—a sort of *Cincinnatiad*.

Samuel Butler's "Hudibras," written in 1663, was a satire directed against the Puritans. Pepys, though testifying to its popularity, could not see the wit of "so silly an abuse of the Presbyter knight going to the wars." Brackenridge was able to imitate Butler in purpose at least. The aim of both "Hudibras" and "The Modern Chevalier" was not artistic but polemic. The doggerel metre, the forced rhymes, and the generally tedious character of the two poems as a whole, are features which most impress the reader of today. "Hudibras" is of that class of books more often quoted than read. Alas for poor Brackenridge, his poem is neither.

Here is the opening part of "The Modern Chevalier" that deals with the Society of the Cincinnati. This part alone is some twenty-three pages in length:

CINCINNATUS, A POEM

What time the States had settled peace
With adversaries over seas,
And troops disbanded, it seem'd good,
To institute a brotherhood,
Among the chieftains of the war,
Of Cincinnati character,
Who now laid by their arms and came,
To seek an agricultural fame,
On territory they had sav'd.
For, as together they had brav'd,
The toils of service, wish'd a tie,
At least upon the memory,
Of that companionship; hence 'twas,
The institution came to pass,
Of a society and a badge.
At first it did provoke the rage,
Of several of the citizens,
As not republican; and hence,
When one of these in rambling gait,
Came to a village of the state,
With badge dependant at his bosom,
It seem'd a singular rosy crozum,
And drew attention and surmise;
And every one that seem'd more wise,
Began discussion of th' affair.
A certain pedagogue was there,
Did first accost, and ask'd the rise
And the intendent of device,
And how he got it, when and where;
Effigies of a bird of the air,
And other such interrogatories.
The Cincinnat who heard the queries,
Explain'd the history of the club,
And effigy upon the bob;
Videlicet, that having fought,
And put the adversar's to trot,
Retir'd from war like Cincinnatus,
And were about to plant potatoes;
But first in memory of their warfare,
And individuals did most care for,
Had set up club and wore a badge.
And what bird have you in the cage,

Quoth pedagogue? Is it a goose,
That you have chosen for your use?
Or a wild turkey or a swan?
This hurt the Cincinnati man—
Quoth he, I will not say you mean,
T' affront, and throw out with design,
This sarcasm on the badge we wear;
But 'tis an eagle of the air.

The "Cincinnati" and the pedagogue continue their discussion of the Eagle which so little resembles the real bird of that name, and then the pedagogue inquires further:

But what resemblance does it bear
To him of Roman character;
Who wore no brocket at his button
Or a remarkable eschutch'on;
But when had ended war and battle;
Return'd t' his harrow and draught cattle,
Without a goose-resembling bauble;
Or other bird or beast, could gabble,
A word of Latin or of Greek.
But what the phrase it seems to speak?
Relinquit omnia, servare
Rempublicam; but quere,
Had this same Roman much to leave?
Or, would he not have laugh'd in's sleeve,
T' have had these words applied to him?
And you that are of modern time,
Were in the same predicament,
Before you to the warfare went,
So that the point is not in this,
From whence the eulogy takes rise,
The having left an ox or two,
Or an old horse with which did plough;
But your returning to your place,
When armies had been sent to grass;
So that 'twere better you had made it,
Nunc victor ad aratrum redit:
Or some intelligible phrase,
That would bespeak the proper praise,
Which really did belong to such,
As not ambitious over much,
Return'd from victory and war,

EARLY OPPOSITION TO THE CINCINNATI

Quoth pedagogue? Is it a goose,
That you have chosen for your use?
Or a wild turkey or a swan?
This bore the Cincinnati man—
Quoth he, I will not say you mean,
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This sarcasm on the badge we wear:
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The "Cincinnati" and the pedagogue continue their discussion of the Eagle which so little resembles the real bird of that name, and then the pedagogue inquires further:

But what resemblance does it bear
To him of Roman character;
Who wore no bracket at his button
Or a remarkable exclamation;
But when bad ended war and battle,
Returned to his harrow and draught cattle,
Without a goose-resembling gaggle;
Or other bird or beast, could cobble,
A word of Latin or of Greek,
But what the phrase it seems to speak?
Relinquit ensem, cetvare
Rempubliam; but quere,
Had this same Roman much to leave?
Or, would he our have laugh'd in's sleeve,
T' have had these words applied to him?
And you that are of modern time,
Were in the same predicament,
Before you to the wars he went,
So that the point is not in this,
From whence the eulogy takes rise,
The having left an ox or two,
Or an old horse with which did plough:
But your returning to your place,
When armies had been sent to grass:
So that 'twere better you had made it,
Nunc victor ad rastrum redit:
Or some intelligible phrase,
That would bespeak the proper praise,
Which really did belong to such,
As not ambitious over much,
Return'd from victory and war,

To till their ground, and take the care,
Of stock upon their farms; but wore,
No other ensign than before,
With barbarous Latin such as this,
Assum'd for the diagnosis.

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Just as one cannot escape the thought that Judge Burke's opposition to the Cincinnati may have been somewhat inspired by his ineligibility, so do we feel that similar personal pique may have inspired Judge Brackenridge's feelings. The reverend judge's services in the Revolution did not qualify him for membership in the Pennsylvania Cincinnati. During the first year of that war he had continued his work as a schoolmaster in western Pennsylvania, but in 1776 and 1777 served as a chaplain. Some of his fierce sermons were published in 1778. Apparently he was never regularly commissioned a chaplain, possibly because, in the words of his son, "although licensed to preach, he was never ordained nor formally consecrated to the ministry." So one is not surprised that in his *Cincinnatiad* he criticises the society for not admitting militia officers to membership.

Are many others that have fought,
And taken the Hessian by the throat,
And may deserve more solid praise,
Than wearing that small thing of brass,
Unworthy even of you that chuse,
To have the ensign of the goose?

In another passage Brackenridge tells of an argument between the "Cincinnat" and a former corporal, who could not see why he should not have been admitted to the Society of the Cincinnati:

Quoth Cincinnat: an officer,
Alone can have a right to wear,
The emblem of the victory; . . . .
Is not the officer the head?
When he gave orders you obey'd,
So that 'tis proper you possess
But the inferior grade and place;
And have no badge or institution.
The corporal felt his passion rushing.
Quoth he, have just as good a right,
As you, though thus you did come by't
To take to ourselves and wear a badge.

The Cincinnat in greater rage,
Quoth he, forsooth, because you fought,
Where battle was a little hot,
You claim the privilege with us,
To be o' th' inside of the house,
To have insignia at your breast!
As well might an irrational beast,
The horse that draws artillery gun,
Or soldier had to ride upon,
Put in for heraldry, because,
Has sometimes been where danger was,
What would you think to see a ribbon
Or badge hung at his tail or hip-bone?

In yet another place there is described an argument between a militia officer and the "Cincinnat," again as to the former's ineligibility for membership in the order:

Quoth he, though but a common rat
I am, and you a Cincinnat . . . .
The undervaluing, you throw out
Hits me, and others in the crowd,
Who being but militia persons,
Who in the war have made exertions
Yet have no right to wear the badge,
As indirectly you alledge,
By title and the club assum'd. . . . .
Quoth he, no doubt, we are but goats
And scarse above the beast that trots,
Compar'd with you, in what was done,
And services you son of a gun;
Tag-rag and bob-tail, doubtless, are
Compar'd with vet'ran officer;
Because we have not at our bosom
That thing of yours, a rosy crozum;
Are not embellish'd with a broach,
At head, or neck, or breast, or crotch;
A Latin motto or an ensign,
Our toils, or services evincing . . . .
and so on.

Judge Brackenridge convinced, at least, the anonymous editor of the 1851 edition of "Modern Chivalry." In a footnote to the chapter on the Cincinnati the editor says:

EARLY OPPOSITION TO THE CINCINNATI

The Cincinnati in greater rage,
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Judge Brackenridge convinced, at least, the anonymous editor of the 1871 edition of "Modern Chivalry." In a footnote to the chapter on the Cincinnati the editor says:

In this satire, the author handles, with his usual effective wit, the offensive attempt at establishing a hereditary aristocracy. It is perhaps the only thing in which the acts of Washington cannot be entirely approved; having yielded, in this instance, to the wishes of his brother officers, for the establishment of a military order, transmissible to the eldest son. Although, modified from its original plan, it is still a failure, the public voice in this country having disapproved of it. The author shows himself here to be no aristocrat, yet no leveller: he was in favor of giving the just reward to merit, but only where it was the personal right of the individual, from having fairly earned that reward, by worth and public service, civil or military. But he was not for placing the latter above the former.

The opposition to the Cincinnati in America was confined to the written or spoken word, chiefly the former, and usually the author hid behind a pseudonym such as "Cassius." In France matters took a more violent turn.

During the first phases of the Revolution *l'Ordre de Cincinnatus,* as it was called, having outlived the early opposition, was a sort of symbol of liberty. On July 12, 1789, Camille Desmoulins, breathless from Versailles with the news of Necker's dismissal, mounted a table in the garden of the Palais Royal and proposed that first of all considerations in eighteenth-century revolutions—a cockade. "What shall it be?" he exclaimed to the excited multitude around. "Shall it be green, the color of hope? Or shall it be blue, the color of the *Cincinnati* and of American independence?" Voices in the crowd called out, "Let it be green, the color of hope!" But green was found to be also the color of the liveries of the Count d'Artois, brother of the King, so red and blue, the colors of Paris were chosen. To distinguish them from the colors of the Duc d'Orleans, also red and blue, LaFayette suggested the introduction of a conservative strip of the old national white, and thus the renowned *tricolor* came into being.

But Desmoulins, the clever politician, did not long retain his supposed admiration for the Cincinnati. As feeling became more and more inflamed, he harangued the crowd in a speech against LaFayette:

I denounce you to departments as secretly ambitious, a slave to the Court and the two Chambers, and like the marshals whom the revolt has given the baton and who regard themselves as bastards seeking to become legitimate. But all of a sudden you embrace each other and mutually proclaim yourselves fathers of the country! You say to the

nation: "Have faith in us. We are modern Cincinnati, Washingtons, Aristides." Who will believe such stuff? Stupid people! (Lamartine, "Histoire des Girondins," Livre III, Ch. IX.)

There came a time indeed when the possession of the Eagle of the Cincinnati became a great danger, and might consign the wearer to the scaffold, or to the death at the hands of the fierce rabble. On one of the dark days of The Terror, September 4, 1792, a number of political prisoners, including the venerable Duc de Brissac and other persons of distinction, were ordered to be transported, under escort, from Orléans to Paris. Seven wagons, each containing eight prisoners, loaded with chains, set out on the fatal journey, headed by "Fournier, l'Américain," a cut-throat renegade from Martinique, said to have been in the pay of the Duc d'Orléans. Arrived at the gate of Versailles, they were attacked by a mob of assassins that lay in waiting and butchered in cold blood. A few escaped in the confusion, but forty-seven dead bodies, with chains still hanging to their hands and feet, were piled up in the street. "Fournier rode at the head of the convoy. From the neck of his horse," says Lamartine, "dangled a collar composed of Crosses of Saint-Louis, *Eagles of Cincinnatus,* and other military decorations snatched from the breasts of the victims." (Lamartine, Livre XXVI, Ch. III, IV.)

Many of the French members perished on the guillotine, including the President of the society, the Count d'Estaing. The venerable Vice-President, the Marquis de Rochambeau, by a near-miracle, managed to escape. The Prince de Broglie, propositus of the present President of the French Cincinnati, the Duc de Broglie member of the French Academy, was one of those who perished.

In the discussion in the "Tribunate" on Napoleon Bonaparte's proposal to establish the Legion of Honor, which at first was hereditary, Savoie-Rollin opposed it. He cited the formation of the Order of the Cincinnati in America which had caused, he said, trouble, and added that the states had finally passed rigorous resolutions against it. (St.-Maurice, "Hist. de la Lég. d'Hon.," p. 70.)

For all this opposition and political threats, but one member of the Society of Cincinnati renounced his membership. This was Major-General William Heath, of Massachusetts, who was, it would seem, carried away by the ideas of the French Republicans. Thus it was events in Europe, rather than the opposition of men in America, which

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brought about his resignation. His feelings are set forth in his letter to Major-General Knox:

ROXBURY, 18 Jan. 1793

DEAR SIR,—

When all Europe have their eyes fixed on France, and every one who reveres the rights of man is admiring the magnanimous conduct of the French, I was the other day most sensibly affected on reading the account of the conduct of General Dumourier, when he presented himself to the National Convention in the month of October last,—an officer whose military and literary talents place him in a most conspicuous light, and who cannot but possess the most refined sentiments of honor as well as exquisite feelings for those marks of approbation which are conferred on distinguished merit, than which nothing can be dearer to a soldier. Ye this great and celebrated Citizen-General, in the presence of that august Assembly, *took* the *Cross of St. Louis* from his breast, and made an offering of it at the Shrine of Liberty, thereby indicating that he disdained to wear among a free and equal people any mark of distinction, *evinced* by an *order* or *device,* which could be construed repugnant to liberty and equality.

If the *Cross of St. Louis,* long worn in France as an emblem of the distinguished merit of the wearer, is judged by this great man as improper to be worn in a Republick, how can I, a *citizen* of the *renowned American Republick,* allow my name to stand affixed to an *institution,* or wear a *device* which is construed by many of our fellow-citizens the indication of an *order* and *distinction* in society. Animated by this recent example of the Gallic Citizen-General, I do hereby request that you will be pleased to *erase* my name from the *institution* of the Society of the Cincinnati, as I do from this moment for *myself, renounce* the *institution:* at the same time I pray you be assured that affection and esteem for every brother officer of the late American Army will continue to possess a warm corner of my heart, too deeply impressed to be effaced, or to stand in need of the aid of any device or institution, as remembrancers.

While we are celebrating in high festivity the conduct and success of our French friends, let us, if not already practicing, imitate such of their examples as appear to be evidently marked with propriety, and calculated to establish those principles which form the permanent basis of a genuine Republick.

With sentiments of respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, dear Sir, your most obedient Servant, W. HEATH

HON'BLE HENRY KNOX, ESQUIRE,

Secretary to the General Society of the Cincinnati.

("Mems. of Mass. Soc. of the Cin., 1890," p. 239.)

EARLY OPPOSITION TO THE CINCINNATI

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If the Cross of St. Louis, long worn in France as an emblem of the distinguished merit of the wearer, is judged by this great man as improper to be worn in a Republick, how can I, a citizen of the renowned America Republick, allow my name to stand affixed to an institution, or wear a device which is construed by many of our fellow-citizens the indication of an order and distinction in society. Animated by this recent example of the Gallic Citizen-General, I do hereby request that you will be pleased to erase my name from the institution of the Society of the Cincinnati, as I do from this moment for myself, renounce the institution; at the same time I pray you be assured that affection and esteem for every brother officer of the late American Army will continue to possess a warm corner of my heart, too deeply impressed to be effaced, or to stand in need of the aid of any device or institution, as remembrancers.

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About the time this letter was written, General Dumourier had already begun to waver in attachment to the cause that he had been commending; and soon after he contracted what M. Thiers called "guilty engagements" with the allied enemies of France. The convention set a price on his head and he took refuge in the camp of the Austrians, who were soon to imprison Lafayette. After long wandering in exile he died in England in 1823. Thiers said of him that he was "a superior man, without attachment to any cause, without principle, fifty years of whose life were spent in court intrigues, and thirty in exile, while only three were occupied on a theatre worthy of his genius." Madame Roland says he was "good-humored with his friends, and ready to cheat every one of them."

So General Heath selected a poor model in renouncing his Cincinnati membership and we are glad to note that his descendants have felt differently. His grandson was admitted to hereditary membership in 1844 to succeed him.

An unpublished letter, dated April 27, 1790, of the Baron de Steuben to the New York State Society of the Cincinnati, of which he was President, thus mentions the opposition to the society:

> I had the honor of presiding in that assembly which laid the foundation of our institution, and the moment I put my hand to that respectable act which was to connect us together for purposes most honorable and benevolent, shall always be considered by me as the most precious of my Life.
>
> The clouds which Jealousy and ill-founded prejudice have gathered over our Society have not intimidated me; conscious of the purity of our intentions I have steadily pursued the life of my duty in the station to which you were pleased four years ago to appoint me.
>
> Accept my sincere thanks, gentlemen, for the repeated marks of attention and regard with which I have been distinguished and do me the justice to believe that if my efforts for the good of the Society have not had all the success I wished, that at least I have had the consolation during my Presidency of seeing the tie which binds us, retain its strength and the lustre of our Eagle remain unsullied. . . . . (Steuben Papers, N. Y. Hist. Soc.)

One must pause to correct a frequently made error as to one source of opposition to the Cincinnati. Writer after writer has stated that the Tammany Society, or Columbian Order, was founded for the purpose of opposing the Society of the Cincinnati. Quite the reverse is

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the case. The Tammany Society of New York was but one of the many bodies of that name, and indeed, one of the last to be organized. It was made up of patriotic men, most of them not eligible to membership in the Cincinnati, but nevertheless inspired by laudable purposes. At the meetings of each society in New York it was the custom to drink a toast to the other as the many resolutions and entries in the minutes of each testify. On May 13, 1790, the Cincinnati's seventh birthday, John Pintard, the *Sagamore,* or President, of Tammany sent to Baron de Steuben, President of the New York Cincinnati, a peace-pipe which he had been directed by the Tammany braves to transmit "as a pledge of that friendship which they wish to cultivate with the New York Society of the Cincinnati." Moreover, many of the original members of the Cincinnati were likewise members of the Tammany Society. This was, of course, long before the Tammany Society became interested in political affairs. It must be remembered that even today the political organization known as Tammany Hall and the Society of Tammany or Columbian Order in the City of New York are separate and distinct entities, though they so far interlock that it is customary for the leaders of the party organization to be officers of the society. (Cf. Hume, "Soc. of Cinc. and the Tammany Soc., N. Y. Biogr. & Geneal. Rec.," 1937, in press.)

In his amusing plea for the bonus for the "Veterans of Future Wars," the youthful National Commander says:

> It was George Washington of whom everyone says today that he was first in war, first in peace, and first in the organization of a veterans' group. Washington made the mistake of limiting his veteran Society of the Cincinnati to officers and it was thus arithmetically doomed to fail. Quantity, not quality, is what counts votes.
>
> Woodrow Wilson used to talk, pridefully, of "Princeton for the Nation's Service" and he probably had reference to that famous alumnus, Aaron Burr, Jr., Princeton, A. B. 1771, LL. D. 1803, the intellectual founder of militant financial veteranism. . . . . Burr moulded a group of ex-soldiers into a Patriotic Society stirred with a sentiment that was to last well into the nineteenth century. . . . . He went for a powwow of course to Wall Street, which then consisted of an ex-wall, a tepee, half-breeds, hopes and hokum. Burr expanded the tepee into a Wigwam and called together all the gentlemen from the dingier residential areas of the East Side. . . . . Aaron Burr founded back there in 1797 a veterans' organization which has outlasted wars and peaces of a hundred and fifty years; his veterans by

enrollment and grant are known today throughout the civilized and semi-civilized world as Tammany Hall. (L. J. Gorin, Jr., "Patriotism Prepaid," pp. 1-3.)

Public opinion, quick to be aroused to the imaginary dangers of the Society of the Cincinnati, was almost as quick in realizing its mistake. After all it was not possible to suspect hidden plots and veiled attempts to establish hereditary evils of a body of old soldiers headed by the Father of His Country. Little by little opposition disappeared. The several legislatures did not put into effect the proposed laws against the Cincinnati and its members. With the adoption of the Constitution of the United States serious opposition to the Society of the Cincinnati ceased. The circular letter to the several State societies sent out by the general meeting in Philadelphia in 1790 contains this sentence: "It gives us unexpressible pleasure to find that the unreasonable and illiberal clamor, which at one moment had been excited against our institution, has totally subsided."

Mr. Jefferson, though never openly acknowledging that he had been wrong in his opinion of the Cincinnati, did not hesitate to appeal to the Virginia Society for a gift. Obviously as the Virginia society had voted to admit no hereditary members, it was but a question of time until there would have to be some disposition made of the fund made up of the month's pay of each original member. Mr. Jefferson, knowing this, wrote on November 17, 1817, to the President of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia, asking that the society's fund be given to the Central College (now the University of Virginia). That officer, Judge Francis Taliaferro Brooke, in acknowledging the letter, did not commit the society. He said, however, "History has afforded few examples better calculated to inspire succeeding ages with the love of Country than the one exhibited by those who instituted the Society of the Cincinnati. The members that now remain take no part in Eulogium to themselves but it is thought not unimportant to the American Character that they owe it to their departed Brethren and to posterity that the motives and feelings that gave life and being to the institution should not be misunderstood. Those motives and feelings are very ably Stated in the recorded declaration of its founders. A more enlarged exposition of them in an oration to be delivered by the professor of the Class of Cincinnati, or one of its members to be selected for that object at its anniversary com-

mencement would probably best conduce to perpetuate and explain the Character of the institution. . . . . " (November 27, 1817.) (Original in the Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.)

Thus the Virginia Cincinnati established the "Cincinnati Oration" still delivered at commencements at Washington and Lee University. It is no longer necessary that it be devoted to the defence of the Society of the Cincinnati. But had it not been felt by the members that such was necessary in 1819, the year of the foundation of the University of Virginia by Mr. Jefferson, the society's fund of $25,000, a large sum in those days, might have been given to that institution of learning. So it may be said that Mr. Jefferson's hostility to the Cincinnati cost the new university which he was fathering a sum that would have endowed, as he himself said, one of the professorships.

As time went on the Cincinnati came to be the emblem, in the minds of many, of patriotism. For example, in Edward Everett Hale's "The Man Without a Country," Philip Nolan turned out to be a patriot after all, and did not really hate his country, and the author seeks to show something of the man's true character. In describing his last hours Hale wrote: "But in an hour, when the doctor went in gently, he found that Nolan had breathed his life away with a smile. He had something pressed close to his lips. It was his father's badge of the Order of the Cincinnati."

Rarely does one find in literature of today any misstatement as to the old opposition to the Cincinnati. An exception is in H. G. Wells's well-known "History of Civilization." It reads: "Washington, when he became President of the United States, abolished the only order that has ever adorned any citizen of the American Republic, the Order of the Cincinnati; because he had no use for the snob in his fellowmen." Aside from modern examples, Mr. Wells probably never saw the bust of John Paul Jones wearing the French Order of Military Merit. As for his mistake about the Cincinnati, the late Charles Beatty Alexander, Vice-President General, wrote him, and Mr. Wells acknowledged the letter, defending his statements in part. He has not corrected the error in later editions of his book.

In 1847 when the officers of the American Army of Occupation in Mexico at the close of the war with that country, formed an hereditary society, there was never a word of criticism. So the Aztec Club of 1847 came into being with none of the birth pangs that had beset the naissance of the Cincinnati.

EARLY OPPOSITION TO THE CINCINNATI

In 1798, when war again threatened the country, John Adams, one of the earliest enemies of the Cincinnati, was President of the United States. His letters to several State societies of the Cincinnati express his gratitude for their patriotic sentiments, and his faith in them. To the Rhode Island Cincinnati, just one hundred and thirty-eight years ago today, he said: " . . . . I trust that, by the blessing of Heaven, and the valor of our citizens, under their ancient and glorious leader, you will be able to transmit your fairest inheritance to posterity." (C. F. Adams, "Works of John Adams," VIII, p. 208.) To the South Carolina Cincinnati he wrote a few months earlier that "when the Cincinnati of South Carolina pledge their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, I believe no man will doubt their integrity." *(Ibid.,* VIII, p. 222.) What a change had come over Mr. Adams since his misgivings of a decade and a half before! His good wishes to the Rhode Island Cincinnati have come true, for the original members of the State have indeed transmitted their fairest inheritance to posterity, namely, their ideals, which are those of the hereditary members of the Rhode Island and other State Societies of the Cincinnati of today.

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